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ABSTRACT

In spring 1992, Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) completed its long-range strategic plan. The consultant who helped guide the institution through the process presented the plan to the Board of Trustees with 60 recommendations for implementation. The Chairman of the Board established task forces to study the recommendations for each major division of the college. Each task force ranked the recommendations by priority, suggested a general budget for each, then brought the recommendations back to the entire Board in a retreat setting for final discussion. The plan was divided into six major sections: facilities; instructional programs; student development; finance; staff development; and planning. After the retreat, each set of priorities was distributed to the staff and faculty to develop an implementation plan. The implementation plan included specific objectives with timelines, budget, and resources needed. The most controversial part of the plan was the development and expansion of the campus. The consultant's recommendations for expansion included four options: centralized delivery; transformational delivery; expanded delivery; and decentralized delivery. At a later meeting, the Board adopted a compromise "Option E," which included maintaining and expanding the downtown campus, retaining central administration and resources, and responding to off-site educational demand as appropriate. The consultant's report also called for a satellite campus of significant size to be developed, a step currently under consideration. A sample progress checklist is attached. (JMC)

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Vail, Colorado

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THE CAPE FEAR PLAN

CAPE FEAR
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

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JC 920 369

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Putting The Plan To Work

In the Spring of 1992, Cape Fear Community College completed its long-range strategic plan. The consultant who helped guide the institution through the process presented it to the Board with 60 recommendations for implementation. The recommendations were derived from interviews with four focus groups (representing business/ industry, county and city government, education (both secondary and higher), from surveys of high school and adult populations, from surveys of business leaders, and from local and regional data banks.

Some of the recommendations, especially those that dealt with campus expansion were not supported by the majority of the Board. Others, pertaining to finance, curriculum, and student services enjoyed general support.

As a result, the Chairman of the Board established task forces to study recommendations for each major division of the College. Task forces were composed of Board members, faculty, staff, and students. Each task force prioritized the recommendations and suggested a general budget for each. They then brought their recommendations back to the entire Board in a retreat setting for final discussion. A sample of the prioritizing sheet is attached (Appendix A).

The plan was divided into six major sections: 1) Facilities, 2) Instructional programs, 3) Student development, 4) Finance, 5) Staff Development, and 6) Planning. The leader of each task force presented the prioritized recommendations to the entire Board for Discussion. At the end of the retreat, the Board had reached consensus on the priorities for each division of the College.

Each task force, in drawing up its priorities, utilized the findings of three College committees; 1) the Facilities Planning Committee; 2) the Cape Fear 2000 Committee, and 3) the Task Force on Student Success. These committees, composed of faculty, staff, and students, were charged with gathering data for the Board task forces. In each case, the task forces were provided information from the College community as well as representa-

tives of the local community on institutional needs, local demographics, and projections for the year 2000.

After The Retreat

After the retreat, the major work of implementing the plan began. Each set of priorities was distributed to the staff and faculty to develop an implementation plan.

The instructional division of the College developed the implementation plan for (1) programs, the financial division for (2) finance, and (3) facilities, Student Services for (4) student activities, finance and administration for (5) staff development, and the planning, research and grants division for planning.

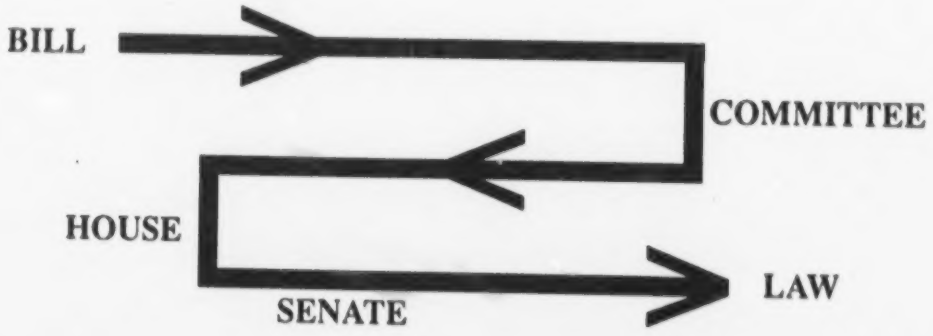
The implementation plan included specific objectives with timelines, budget and resources needed.

Putting The Plan In Place

Daniel Fenn, lecturer at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, maintains that implementing public policy of any kind requires paying attention to a wide array of publics. Fenn is talking about corporations getting laws passed. He describes the customary picture of how the lawmaking process is taught in school with all the pipes and elbows drawn up in a maze from the time the law first enters the pipeline until it is dumped out at the other end and is enacted into public policy.

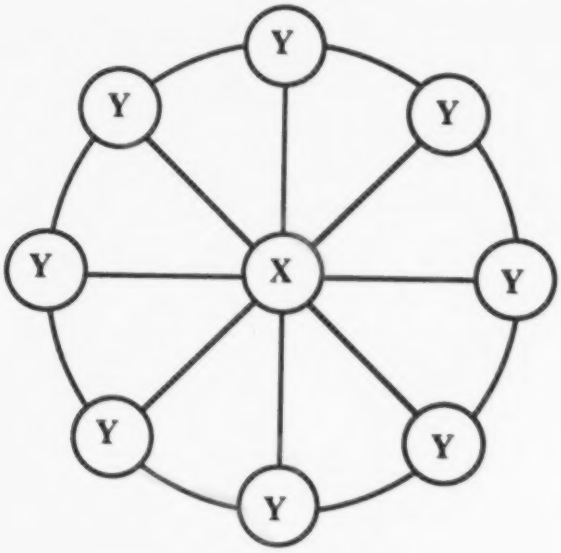
Fenn argues that developing public policy and translating it into law is far more complex than that high school social science class model would indicate.

Figure 1.



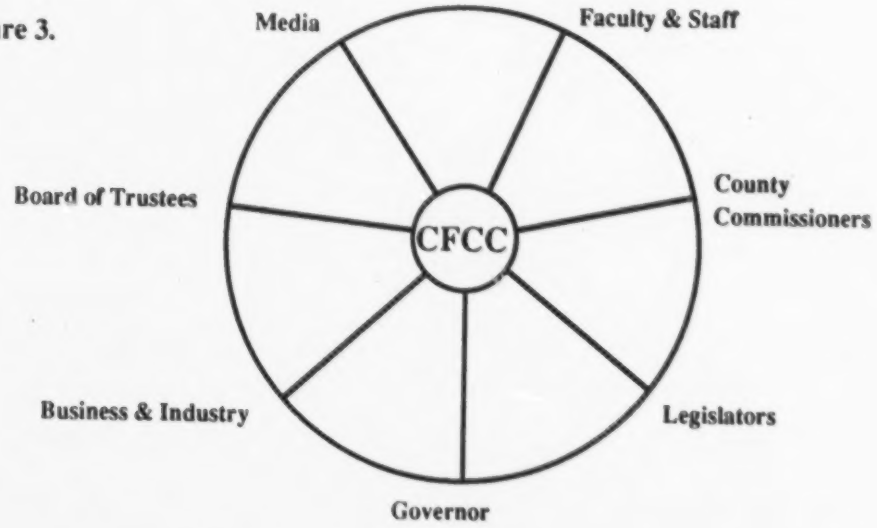
He maintains that a model more closely resembling a wheel with the main actor (X, the person wanting something to happen) at the hub and the various influencing forces (Y) surrounding that person scattered along the rim of the wheel would be a more accurate picture.

Figure 2.



There is a close analogy in all this to the case of putting a plan in motion. The planning agency (the College in this case) finds itself at the center of the wheel surrounded by a number of significant power centers who can make or break the plan. In the case of Cape Fear Community College, the power wheel that Fenn describes would look like this:

Figure 3.



The reality is that the destiny of CFCC is dependent upon many forces including legislators, the governor, the media, other educational entities, the local and state boards, county commissioners, faculty and staff, and leaders in business and industry. To fail to take into account any of those power centers is to put the plan itself at risk.

Perhaps the most controversial part of CFCC's plan was the development and expansion of the campus. While the consultant had arrived at some conclusions about the expansion of the campus based on population growth and projections, those conclusions continue to be debated by the Board, the College community itself, the commissioners, business/industry leaders, the media, and the community at large.

Cape Fear Community College is an urban college located on seven acres in downtown Wilmington on the scenic Cape Fear River. Some would argue that it is landlocked and either needs to be moved to another site of 100 acres or more, or that any expansion of the campus needs to include the development of a large satellite campus located in the suburbs of the City of Wilmington, which would eventually become a second major campus.

Cape Fear Community College serves two counties in North Carolina—New Hanover County, the smallest and most densely populated county in the State (where the main campus is located), and Pender County, a large rural county. Pender has two very diverse populations—a relatively affluent beach community located on the ocean and a less affluent rural population in the central and western portion of the county.

Members of the College Board of Trustees agreed on a strategy for expansion that allows for the incorporation of most of the consultant's recommendations over a period of time, but with some modifications.

The consultant's recommendations for expansion included four options:

Strategy A: Centralized Delivery - Develop the Wilmington campus as the center for all CFCC programs, services, and operations. Follow a course of carefully planned development for the Burgaw campus and open a limited number of extension sites as needs dictate and resources permit. Lease space in the Coast Line Center for specialized occupational programs.

Strategy B: Transformational Delivery - Sell the Wilmington campus, purchase land for a new campus in the northern section of New Hanover County, and build a new campus serving citizens of New Hanover and Pender Counties. Open a limited number of extension sites as needs dictate. Allow the Burgaw campus to develop naturally.

Strategy C: Expanded Delivery - Selectively expand the Wilmington campus through acquisition of leased and/or permanent space, acquire land in northern New Hanover County or southeastern Pender County for new campus construction to serve emerging population centers, and undertake phased construction of the new campus. Lease space in the Coast Line Center for specialized occupational programs and open extension centers as necessary to meet citizen needs. Allow the Burgaw campus to develop naturally.

Strategy D: Decentralized Delivery - Continue the Wilmington campus in its capacity as the administrative headquarters for CFCC operations, but decentralize the delivery of educational services by opening extension centers in a number of locations depending on demand. Place the emphasis on flexible delivery of services using leased facilities and adjunct staff in extension centers. Allow the Burgaw campus to develop naturally.

The consultant himself endorsed option "C" - "Selectively expand the Wilmington campus through acquisition of leased and/or permanent space, acquire land in northern New Hanover County or southeastern Pender County for new campus construction to serve emerging population centers, and undertake phased construction of the new campus. Lease space in the Coast Line Center for specialized occupational programs and open extension centers as necessary to meet citizens needs. Allow the Burgaw campus to develop naturally."

At a general Board meeting the architectural firm, hired by the College to develop a master facilities plan for the campus in the light of the consultant's report, led the Board in a discussion of the options. As a result of that meeting, the Board adopted a compromise option, "Option E:"

1) Maintain and expand the downtown campus;
2) Retain central administration and resources;
3) Respond to off-site educational demand as appropriate;
4) Improve the utilization of the Pender County campus in Burgaw.

The New Hanover County commissioners, whose chairman was part of the planning process, were supportive of that option. After initial discussion that centered on budget difficulties in the county, the commissioners are considering the purchase of land and a building to meet immediate and some long-term needs.

At the same time, at the state level, the Department of Community Colleges had submitted a request for a 243 million dollar bond issue for capital expenditures and improvements at North Carolina's 58 community colleges.

CFCC requested a health science classroom building in its budget since that represented the greatest program and building need on campus. The Governor did not include the community college request in his initial budget. As of this writing the State legislature is still debating the community college bond issue and its merits relative to bond issue requests by the university and the public schools.

The local media has not, as yet, endorsed the community college or the public school bond issues. Interestingly enough, there seems to be general support from the various power centers around the hub of the university for its bond issue. Clearly the community college has work ahead in gaining support from three major power centers: the Governor, the Legislature, and the media. One of the principal concerns raised by the media and the public is the general perception that erecting buildings has, historically, been the responsibility of local government. In some cases that appears to be true, in others it is not the case.

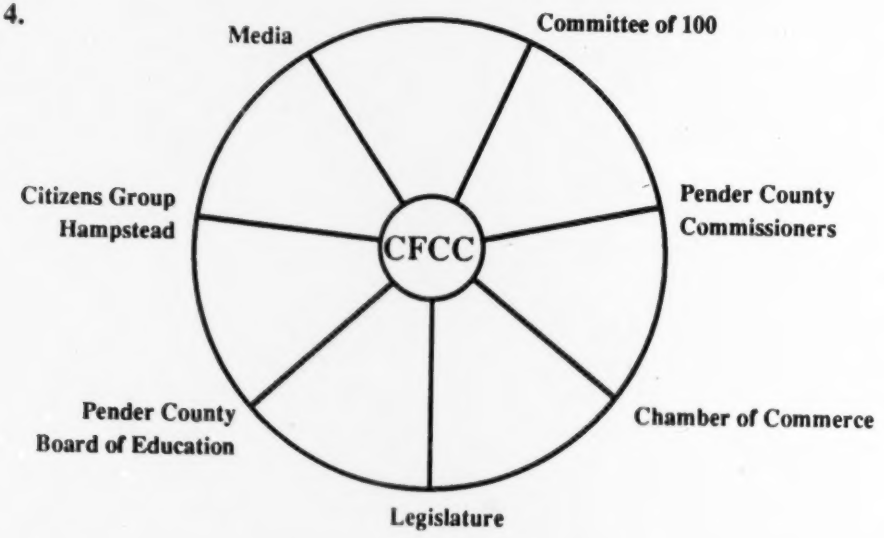
Another influential group, leaders of business and industry, has not yet been heard on the raising of new buildings with the exception of those who have been associated with the system-wide lobbying effort, "North Carolinians for Community Colleges," chaired by Sherwood Smith, CEO of Carolina Power and Light.

On Another Front

The development of an additional satellite campus may develop more quickly than originally anticipated because of political forces at work in Pender County, the other part of CFCC's service area.

The political forces at work in Pender County are different than those in New Hanover County, where the main campus is situated. They are described in Figure 4.

Figure 4.



The consultant's report called for a satellite campus of significant size to be located in Pender County near Hampstead or somewhere near the Pender County, New Hanover County line. Population projections indicate that the area between the two counties near the beaches will continue to grow rapidly.

While the Cape Fear Community College Board of Trustees has not endorsed any immediate, or even long-range, plans for expansion in this area, key leaders from the school board, the county commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce, and business have lobbied the College for developing a campus in that part of Pender County.

Summary

Cape Fear Community College is now implementing the facilities expansion phase of planning. Six new programs have been developed, three in allied health, a College

Transfer program, a computer program and an engineering technology program. Hotel/Motel Management, Tourism and Culinary Arts are in the works. A $500,000 grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation will support the start-up of the allied health programs. A citizens advisory group is already planning Hotel/Motel Management/Culinary Arts.

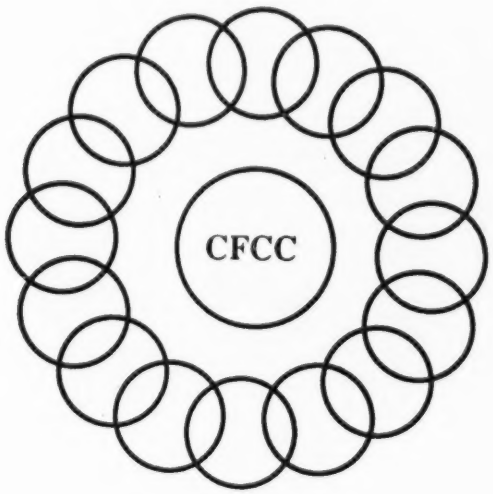
A Task Force on Student Success is tackling most of the recommendations in Student Services. That report is due this summer.

Of the sixty recommendations in the Plan, nearly half have already been implemented. The successful implementation of the remainder rests largely on how well we read and react to the political climate.

The wheel describing political and social influences on the College is constantly before us.

Perhaps a better description of how it all works is through a Venn Diagram, which would have the spheres of influence overlapping.

Figure 5.



In any case, you get the picture. All of us have a number of different bosses to report to. It's wise to find out who they are, early.

"Sample"

ATTACHMENT A

A. Physical Facilities & Educational Delivery. [pages 33-34]	Accomplished	Implemented	Postponed	Rejected	Priority	To Be Started	Date For Completion
1. Acquire 75-200 acres of land near New Hanover/Pender County border to accommodate growth in the next decade...							
2. Acquire additional permanent, rental, and cost-free space proximate to the Wilmington campus to accommodate...growth							
3. Dress the Wilmington Campus...match the campus look with the corporate look							
4. Explore opportunities with K-12 schools systems, UNCW, regional business and industry, civic associations, governmental agencies to share facilities							
5. Increase efforts to provide courses on-site in schools, corporate facilities, community centers, etc...							
6. Examine the possibilities of leasing equipment for technical training							
B. Student Enrollment [Pages 34-35]							
1. Develop comprehensive articulation agreement with regional four-year colleges and universities.							
2. Assess admissions, marketing, and student intake functions...							
3. Conduct regional market research and develop regional segment oriented...plans							

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